Claims

1. A method of reading messages which are sent over a
    data bus in a motor vehicle between electronic
5   units, comprising:
    - at least one communications network based on at
    least one data bus to which several electronic units
    are connected by means of a bus interface,
    - at least one data interface for connecting the
10 communications network with an external data
    processing unit,
    - at least one cyclically overwritable, volatile
    storing means for the storing of messages which were
    sent in the communications network,
15 - at least one monitoring unit having an executable
    program which examines the messages stored in the
    volatile storing means for selected, parameterizable
    attributes,
    - at least one definable trigger event, whose
20 occurrence is monitored by the executable program,
    and upon whose occurrence the cyclical overwriting
    of the volatile storing means is stopped for at
    least as long until the data content of the volatile
    storing means is transferred to a second, non-
25 volatile storing means.

2. The method as defined in claim 1,
    wherein
    the definable trigger event may be read or exchanged
30 over the data interface of the communications
    network.

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3. The method as defined in claim 1 or 2,
    wherein
    the parameterizable attributes may be read or
    exchanged over the data interface of the
5   communications network.

4. The method as defined in claims 1 to 3,
    wherein
    the data content of the non-volatile storing means
10 is, upon request by an external electronic data
    processing device, read thereinto over the data
    interface of the communications network.

5. The method as defined in claims 1 to 4,
15 wherein
    the trigger event is formed from a logic or time-
    related concatenation of the parameterizable
    attributes.

20 6. The method as defined in claims 1 to 5,
    wherein
    the data bus is a CAN bus and the data interface is
    a serial interface or a modem interface.

25 7. The method as defined in claim 7,
    wherein
    the modem interface is a mobile wireless interface
    based on the standards of SMS, GSM or GPRS.

30 8. The method as defined in claim 1 or 5,
    wherein

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the parameterizable attributes are CAN identifier,
error bits, error codes or selected travel data of
the motor vehicle.

5   9.   The method as defined in claim 1,
         wherein
         several trigger events are defined and monitored.

   10.   The method as defined in claims 1 to 9,
10   wherein
         after occurrence of a trigger event, a notification
         to an external data processing device concerning the
         occurrence of the event is effected.

15 11.   The method as defined in claim 10,
         wherein
         the data content of the non-volatile storing means
         is, after sending the notification, read into an
         external electronic data processing device at the
20   request thereof.